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July 8, 1976

Dear George,

Thanks very much for the most interesting preliminary report on the debriefing of your North Vietnamese source concerning LINEBACKER II.

I will look forward to receiving the final wrap-up report, which promises to cast some light on a wide range of obscure subjects.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

George Bush

25X1A

Major General George J. Keegan, Jr., USAF
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
Department of the Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

O/DCI/dkg/kgf/8 July 1976

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USAF review(s) completed.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.



REPLY TO
ATTN OF: IN

22 JUN 1976

SUBJECT: North Vietnamese Comments on LINEBACKER II (U)

TO: The Honorable George Bush
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, DC 20505

1. (C) On 8 March 1976, Lt HO KIM HAI, a former Vietnamese Air Force helicopter pilot, escaped from Vietnam to Thailand in his UH-1 helicopter. Accompanying him in the successful escape were his wife, four children, and his flight mechanic, Sgt NGUYEN VAN THANG.
2. (C) With the concurrence of the Thai Government, Detachment 5, 7602d Air Intelligence Group, subsequently initiated an intensive effort to debrief Lt HAI and Sgt THANG. In May, when the HAI family and Sgt THANG were granted status as US immigrants, the 7602d continued the debriefing effort in San Francisco, where the refugees had joined their new sponsor.
3. (C) These debriefings have proved to be particularly fruitful, providing a great deal of information on conditions in Vietnam since the collapse of the country, reprisals against former South Vietnamese officials, North Vietnamese treatment of repatriates, and North Vietnamese use of former South Vietnamese Air Force aircraft and pilots.
4. (U) Attached are the highlights of one report based on this debriefing effort which I believe should be of particular interest to you and to the other members of the National Foreign Intelligence Board. After completion of this debriefing effort, I will also forward a wrap-up of the significant information obtained.

George J. Keegan Jr.
GEORGE J. KEEGAN JR.
Major General, USAF
Asst Chief of Staff, Intelligence

1 Atch
North Vietnamese Comments
on LINEBACKER II (C)

Cy to: Deputy/DCI/IC []
CIA (Mr. H. Knoche)
State/INR/OD (Mr. Saunders)
Director, DIA (Lt Gen Wilson)
ACS/I, US Army (Maj Gen Aaron)
DIRNAVINTTEL (RADM Inman)
DIRNSA (Lt Gen Allen)

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NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMENTS ON LINEBACKER II (U)

a. (C) During political orientation classes held at Binh Thuy for former Vietnamese Air Force personnel now working for the Communists, Lt HO KIM HAI learned some of the effects of the B-52 raids mounted by the United States in late December 1972. On more than one occasion one of the political officers stated that, had the raids continued for one more week, a general retreat and cessation of hostilities would have been forced. He emphasized that the degree of destruction of the air defenses and industrial base was too extensive to permit prolonged resistance. *IND 220*

b. (C) In early September 1975, on the occasion of North Vietnam's Independence Day, MajGen HOANG KHAM of the North Vietnamese Ministry of Defense arrived at Binh Thuy AB by MI-8 helicopter with a large personal party. Upon his arrival, KHAM prefaced his remarks to former Vietnamese Air Force officers on the scene by telling them that "now that there is no more war, you're no longer our enemies, and there's nothing to hide of the bombing." KHAM said, "the American bastards left only Gia Lam untouched. The other bases didn't even resemble airfields."

c. (C) Later in the day, when the North Vietnamese discovered that they had no tennis players of their own to entertain General KHAM, they recruited Lt HAI to play with him. Between sets of tennis, the general amplified his earlier remarks, emphasizing the seriousness of the North Vietnamese position during the bombing raids. He stated that one more week of bombing would have been intolerable. KHAM said that, prior to the signing of the Paris Accords, the USSR and PRC had pressed North Vietnam to remove the 300,000 North Vietnamese Army troops from South Vietnam and return to protracted guerrilla warfare. While the bombing raids continued, the Soviet and Chinese Governments had pressed the Vietnamese to sue for peace; only the Cubans supported the Vietnamese decision to gamble that the United States would not continue the strikes to the point of confrontation with the USSR and the PRC. The North Vietnamese viewed the US signing of the Paris Accords as a great victory and proof that they would be victorious over South Vietnam.

d. (C) KHAM stated that the US bombing had destroyed all North Vietnamese industrial assets and forced much of their war machinery to be relocated in the mountains. General KHAM also mentioned that the sea lines of communication had been effectively cut and that the Chinese rail link was proving less and less effective, with the Chinese frequently stealing many of the items sent by the USSR. Also, he stated, at one time a US invasion of the North was feared as a real possibility.

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THE HONORABLE GEORGE BUSH
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

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HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Executive Registry

ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF INTELLIGENCE

DATE: 1 JUL 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI (Mr. Bush)
Deputy/DCI/IC (ADM Murphy)
State/INR/OD (Mr. Saunders)
→ CIA (Mr. H. Knoche)
Director, DIA (LtGen Wilso)
ACS/I, USA (Maj Gen Aaron)
DIRNAVINTTEL (RADM Inman)
DIRNSA (Lt Gen Allen)

Pursuant to another report from the same sources forwarded to you on 22 June, Major General Keegan has requested that the attached also be forwarded for your information.

3 Atch

1. Sabotage & Resistance (C), 1 cy
2. Pro-Dissident Sympathies (C), 1 cy
3. N Vietnamese Treatment (C), 1 cy

Jack Morris
JACK MORRIS, Colonel, USAF
Executive to ACS/Intelligence

When Atch(s) is (are) withdrawn or not attached, the classification of CONFIDENTIAL on this correspondence is to be changed to UNCLASSIFIED

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SUBJECT: Sabotage and Resistance in Vietnam Since the Fall (C)

BACKGROUND: (C) During the debriefings of Lt HO KIM HAI, the former VNAF helicopter pilot who escaped to Thailand, and his mechanic, Sgt NGUYEN VAN THANG, evidence emerged of continued resistance and sabotage, as well as information on the steps the North Vietnamese have taken to quell it. Highlights of this reporting follow.

DISCUSSION: (C)

a. In July or August 1976, while Sgt THANG was at home in CAN THO on liberty, the city was shaken by tremendous explosions from the ammunition dump located about midway between CAN THO and BINH THUY. The explosions continued for over two hours, and the populace believed the area was being attacked by aircraft. As a result, a tight curfew was imposed on CAN THO and the people were forbidden to move around the city for five days, while an investigation was conducted. The number of casualties resulting from the blast was unknown, but was the subject of much speculation. It was generally agreed that the explosions were the result of sabotage by resistance forces.

b. On another occasion, in November, while Sgt THANG was deployed to the CAM LY airstrip at DA LAT, the ammunition dump there was blown up by resistance forces. Rockets, small arms ammo, and bombs exploded continuously from 1400 hours until approximately 1800 hours, while fires continued to burn until the following morning. No casualties were reported. THANG said the NVA later claimed to have captured three Montagnards, including a boy about 15 years old. The boy was said to have been caught with lengths of primer cord in his possession.

c. Beginning in July and continuing for the next six months, the NVA flew daily strikes against the resistance groups, using CAM LY airstrip as a base of operations. The gunships were flown by former VNAF crews, but the gunners were NVA troops and the strikes were controlled by an NVA officer who flew as a passenger in a U-17. After the first week of operations, UH-1 slicks airlifted troops into the DAMRONG area northwest of DA LAT in TUYEN DUC Province. THANG stated that the combination of air strikes and troop insertions was successful in relieving the pressure on DA LAT.

d. During this same period, UH-1 gunships and slicks flew similar operations against FULRO forces (acronym for "Front Unifie pour la Liberation des Races Opprimees") operating in DARLAC Province, west-northwest of BAN ME THUOT along the Cambodian border. Other heliborne operations were conducted during Sep - Oct 75 around TANH LINH in BINH THUAN Province. THANG states that operations against resistance forces in the DA LAT area were still being conducted sporadically at the time of his escape in March 1976.

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SUBJECT: Pro-Dissident Sympathies Among Former VNAF Personnel (U)

BACKGROUND: (C) During their recent debriefing in San Francisco, Lt HO KIM HAI and his mechanic, Sgt NGUYEN VAN THANG, provided information concerning the attitudes of former VNAF members toward the communists and the possibilities of further escape attempts. Highlights of that reporting follow.

DISCUSSION: (C)

a. Although most former VNAF flying personnel, both officer and enlisted, were initially treated well by the NVAF, eventually most of them became disillusioned after months of hardship, broken promises, and irregular wages. Sources believe that, given the chance, most would be glad to escape. The main deterrent is the family. Many men pledged to their parents and wives that they would either escape together, as a family, or face their fate together.

b. Sources also believe that, if well led, the former VNAF mechanics could greatly hamper or even cripple air operations at former VNAF bases. Sgt THANG knows of many cases of sabotage committed by individual mechanics, much of it done in such a way that it would not be discovered for some time. For example, mechanics overtorque screws on both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft or deliberately fail to treat parts properly for corrosion control. In one well-known incident, a former VNAF flight mechanic and aircraft tractor driver deliberately crushed CH-47 rotor blades with his tractor. Arrested by North Vietnamese security for gross negligence, the mechanic received three months imprisonment.

c. The main deterrent to further sabotage efforts is the knowledge that, if successful, the sabotage could result in the serious injury or death of other former VNAF personnel on the aircraft. For that reason, and because of a constant watch by North Vietnamese security and planted informers, there has not thus far been a concerted effort to sabotage or destroy aircraft. However, Lt HAI believes that, if a well-led resistance movement should develop, the mechanics have the capacity to seriously undermine all air operations.

d. Lt HAI also states that all his friends planned to listen to the Voice of America in order to learn how he was received in the United States. If they hear that he was well-received, they believe the chances are good for further escapes. Lt HAI fully expects to see more escapes made from BINH THUY AB.

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21 June 1976

SUBJECT: North Vietnamese Treatment of Former VNAF Personnel (U)

BACKGROUND: (C) During the San Francisco debriefing of former VNAF Lt HO KIM HAI and his flight mechanic, Sgt NGUYEN VAN THANG, considerable information was obtained concerning the treatment accorded former VNAF pilots and mechanics by the NVAF. Highlights of this information follow:

DISCUSSION: (C)

a. The treatment accorded former VNAF personnel by the North Vietnamese and the length of time they were held in reeducation camps varied, apparently depending in part on where capture took place. According to both Lt HAI and Sgt THANG, soldiers and airmen caught in the area north of PHAN THIET as far as DA NANG were categorized as POWs, while those captured south of PHAN THIET, in III and IV Corps, were termed "surrenderers."

b. One cadre remarked to Lt HAI that he had been very lucky, because many POWs are still being held in the camps. HAI was held in a reeducation camp in CAN THO from May to August 1975, but he tells of one group of former 3rd Air Division officers who were not released from the LAI KHE Reeducation Camp until February 1976.

c. HAI stated that the NVAF would have preferred to have all former VNAF pilots released from detention, but camp officials, citing the security risks inherent in such a move, demanded that the NVAF vouch for the pilots' reliability, and this the NVAF would not do.

d. On one occasion, during a trip to CON SON Island in late 1975 or early 1976, Lt HAI overheard several high-ranking North Vietnamese officers mention that eleven former VNAF pilots were still being held on the island. The "air pirates" -- as they were called -- reportedly were caught there on 1 May 1975, as they were attempting to escape.

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